

# Robert Scheer at FFF Conference 2007, Part 1 of 6

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Robert Scheer on "Ike Was Right and We Are Becoming What We Despise" at the Future of Freedom Foundation's <http://fff.org> Restoring the Republic, 2007.

Robert Scheer covered presidential politics for The Los Angeles Times for thirty years. He is the author of six books, including: With Enough Shovels: Reagan, Bush, and Nuclear War; America after Nixon: The Age of the Multinationals; and coauthor of The Five Biggest Lies Bush Told Us about Iraq.

Playlist of Scheer's lecture: [http://www.youtube.com/view\\_play\\_list?p=24B11D216AD6C419](http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=24B11D216AD6C419)

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a syndicated columnist base with the san francis he is a contributing editor at the nation and editor-in-chief of truth digg.com one of the Internet's finest liberal websites he has a clinical professor of communications at the Annenberg School of the University of Southern California one of the things that that distinguishes Bob sheer from other critics of the of the Iraq war is that as you know many many of the people that are now criticizing the war criticizing it in terms of well it hasn't been managed correctly if only they had followed this plan or if only they had had this person in the position from the very beginning what what comes through bob shears articles and you can check him out on the internet and the archives is a sense of deep moral outrage and moral indignation you just see the passion and this man's writings so when he agreed to come and speak at this conference it was a tremendous honor his title of his talk was actually a combination of two of his op eds Ike was right and we are becoming what we despised please welcome Robert Scheer thank you I feel sort of like the atheist invited to address the Episcopalian congregation some people must be muttering who let him in and what is he going to say in fact you know I was been thinking about this a lot of all week in a you know a half century ago I hate to admit it when i was at City College in New York we had a wonderful building there and built that with the stone from the subway when they dug the subway they built something called shepard hall the Great Hall and

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called shepard hall the Great Hall and we had alcoves in the cafeteria and great city college was the great school of immigrant kids the Harvard of the poor had more Nobel Prize winners than any college in America at one point undergraduate education and we had about 20 different socialist alcoves at vegetarian ones who had everything else and you know the trotskyist and the Stalinist and the this one under that one and sort of legendary going back at City College and then there was one alcove and I didn't agree with them but I admired their courage and these people believed in Ludwig von Mises and Frederick higher and iron around and so forth and they were very strange and they didn't you know don't really talk to them or anything and I've thought about it a lot over the years one reason being I this website that I edit TruthDig is a site which by the way very proud of it and that we won the webby for best political blog and getting an award Tuesday night and I feel very good about it but what but one reason we're still in business is because Lew Rockwell and another cycle antiwar.com send us a lot of traffic and readers and so I checked out those sites and you know obviously I've been checking out libertarian so what I've even voted for a few libertarians in my day you know but I the larger view I have all this and is that in fact those fellows in the alcove were closer to the truth

stand the fellows and the other 20 alcoves and I say this regretfully because I was raised in a generation that believed in FDR FDR was a God in my house and you know we came from garment work of parents and we look to the New Deal of salvation and what have you but at this point looking at

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have you but at this point looking at what has happened to the country I give up the federal government I the programs that I care about really have been reduced in significance i mean bill clinton was a guy i voted for oh i'm sorry it's just not am i doing something wrong okay i'll speak up then they'll say two guys shouting and so for us and show the passion but you know Bill Clinton ended the last federal poverty program the earlier attempt at a poverty program really was destroyed by Lyndon Johnson because of his foreign adventurer in Vietnam and when I look at the programs that the federal government is involved in that's supposed to help the vulnerable help the poor help the needy level the plate feel all the things that I care about their minuscule compared to what's done for corporations Bill Clinton in the telecommunication Bill Clinton in the financial services modernization act when I look at all the lobbying and all the perks and then particularly when I look at what General Eisenhower referred to President Eisenhower's the military-industrial complex if one word is proposes swap let's just do away with the federal government take our chances with state governments take our chances in the pro sector I go for that bargain myself now I as far as my appreciation of eisenhower I'm not new to this I probably the bravest thing I've done in my life was I war and I like Ike button in the Bronx when I was a kid and I did like him I thought he was the general who understood war and its risks I thought I saw this day still think Eisenhower destroy deserves a great credit for ending the Cold War of beginning the end of the Cold War when he got cruise ship to the United States show Krushchev the farm fields of Kansas

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show Krushchev the farm fields of Kansas and so forth invited the emotion of peaceful coexistence I'm competition and most importantly Eisenhower was very aware of the dangers of foreign involvement he's the one who refused to put ground troops into Vietnam that remained for John Kennedy who somehow more admired by liberals I don't know why and Eisenhower was very cautious and in his farewell address a document that you know we used to pay more attention to but is more vital than ever Eisenhower warned about the military-industrial complex and even though I have a great deal of respect for our previous speaker Karen perkowski can never pronounce it correctly and we actually made her our truth digger of the week on our site and I think she's one of the bravest and Claire is thinking individual the country I don't think our problem began with the abandonment of the you are the adoption of the Constitution and the abandonment of the Articles of Confederation I think the problem because with the whole notion of empire and the obsession with the national security state and I say this in part as a journalist I know when you write about local issues when you write about domestic issues even at national level you can demand to see the documents you can demand to get the facts and your readers support you in that demand and your editors support you in that the man you can tell the City Council wait a minute you know we have even without sunshine noise we have a right to know what you decided that meaning and what money change hands are so for us when you talk about national security we lose all those rights that's what Daniel Ellsberg whether brave was the guys in the country was sitting here is going to be speaking tomorrow is all about the Pentagon Papers is it basically academic a basically academic study I remember I was one of those who read the Pentagon

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was one of those who read the Pentagon Papers quite early on and at first I was disappointed you know the thing a detail and texture and complexity you know I thought it was going to have the hot stuff where are the good parts you know and it was really a very thoughtful examination of how we got into them how did this travesty occur and so forth there wasn't anything in the Pentagon Papers that we didn't have a right to know we paid for this scholarly study and they didn't want us to read because it was an embarrassment enormous embarrassment because it revealed that they never believed in the war we know that now McNamara see

the movie fog of war where he says 3.4 million indo-chinese died in this war 59,000 American troops and he clearly confesses that he never believed in it for a second we have the Lyndon Johnson tapes you know it to Johnson library Lyndon Johnson in 1964 no conversation with Senator Russell said I could never justify sending a young American to die over there I can't see any national interested it but he had to do it why because Goldwater would use it against them in the election that kind of cynicism de lying the deceit that takes place when national security is invoked gut is not possible with other issues you can't get away with it so there is something very special about the national security state I know libertarians don't just don't like the idea of big government and government and selfless but big government becomes particularly treacherous when you can evoke the fear of people have of the farm that's what George Washington probably a great libertarian said when he warned about foreign entanglement and when Eisenhower spoke and I just want to quote a few paragraphs from eisenhower it couldn't be more relevant to today

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